

## **Status and Prioritization on Blaine House Conference Tourism Recommendations**

Presented to Blaine House Steering Committee  
May 10, 2004

***Recommendation:*** *Convene a development committee to develop degree, research, and extension programs in Hospitality and Recreation.*

- An invitation will soon be extended by DECD to Chancellor Westphal and President Fitzsimmons to attend a meeting of individuals from the university system, DECD, and the tourism industry to begin a discussion concerning the implementation of a full range of educational and research programs at all levels of Maine's higher education system.
- Prior to that meeting, research is being conducted to determine the number and types of currently existing programs throughout Maine.

***Recommendation:*** *Explore a comprehensive branding campaign.*

- Initial discussions have begun with representatives of all the natural resource agencies, and within the Maine Tourism Commission's Natural Resources Committee, concerning currently existing marketing programs within each agency. These discussions will continue at a meeting to be convened soon with the goal of determining avenues for possible inter-agency collaboration under a "universal" branding theme.

***Recommendation:*** *Coordinate recreational land-use management.*

- The Maine Tourism Commission's Natural Resources Committee and DECD have been interviewing and meeting with stakeholders from the private landowner, outdoor recreation, and land trust communities to develop a thorough understanding of the opportunities for and perspectives involved in the recreational use of both private and public lands.
- Following recent examples with subcommittee focus work, the Natural Resources Committee plans to form a subcommittee, which will include a broader selection of stakeholders, to develop multiple-use land management models.
- Research is underway into the applicability of the planning work done by groups such as Texas-based Fermata, Inc., for the development of multiple-use land management models.

***Recommendation:*** Establish processes that bring sustainable development criteria into tourism planning.

- Through its stakeholder interviews, as well as through coordinating the work of individual committee members, the Natural Resources Committee has begun researching options for both sustainable tourism certification (so-called “eco-certification”) programs and sustainable tourism development guidelines.
- Research includes examination of existing eco-certification programs in Maine and abroad with an eye toward determining applicability statewide.
- Research also includes examination of sustainable tourism development across the United States.
- Examination of projects developed by Texas-based Fermata, Inc., is applicable for this recommendation as well.

***Recommendation:*** Improve tourism and recreational business incentives.

- DECD is currently exploring applicability of tax incentives similar to the Pine Tree Zones to a range of tourism development proposals.

***Recommendation:*** Increase the state’s capacity to provide technical assistance to municipalities seeking tourism industry growth.

- Present capacity, both public and private, to provide technical assistance is currently under examination.

***Recommendation:*** Broaden the Department of Economic and Community Development tourism capabilities.

- DECD is initiating an assessment of its present capacity to deliver technical assistance and business development support for tourism and recreation, including an evaluation of business development and tourism staffing and resources, both in-house and in associated economic development agencies and councils of government.